

FINAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

RIVERSIDE BINDERY COMPLEX

237 PUTNAM AVENUE AND 19-23 BLACKSTONE STREET

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|----------|-------------------------------------|----|
| I. | Location and Economic Status | 1 |
| II. | Description | 5 |
| III. | History of the Property | 7 |
| IV. | Significance of the Property | 9 |
| V. | Relationship to the Criteria | 14 |
| VI. | Recommendations | 15 |
| VII. | Standards and Criteria | 17 |
| VIII. | Proposed Order | 21 |
| Appendix | Statement of Owner's Representative | 24 |

The Cambridge Historical Commission voted unanimously on June 30, 2005, to recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed Order designating the Riverside Bindery Complex as a landmark under Ch. 2.78, Article III of the Municipal Code.

The Riverside Bindery is historically significant as the last intact industrial complex associated with the book publishing industry in Cambridge. The four buildings that comprise the bindery are architecturally significant as examples of the specialized structures required in the printing trades, and for their associations with important architects.

Designation of the Riverside Bindery Complex will protect these important buildings from demolition and inappropriate alterations or new construction. Provisions of the designation order are designed to facilitate routine alterations.

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FINAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

RIVERSIDE BINDERY COMPLEX

237 PUTNAM AVENUE AND 19-23 BLACKSTONE STREET

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address and Zoning

The Riverside Bindery complex consists of four buildings located on two lots totaling 35,300 square feet at 237 Putnam Avenue and 19-23 Blackstone Street. The protected premises are lots 11 and 25 on assessor's map 129. Lots 10, 26, and 27, which are held in common with the protected premises, contain 21,252 square feet and are used as a parking lot. The entire premises is assessed at \$7,876,000 in the current property database.

The proposed protected premises and three adjacent commonly owned lots are located in a residence C1 zone with an allowable FAR of 0.75 and a 35-foot height limit. The zone permits residential uses, including multi-family, townhouse, and transient accommodations, and limited institutional uses (such as religious-affiliated, educational, and health-care related, and social service uses, all of which are subject to the institutional use regulations of the zoning code), but all other office, commercial, retail, or industrial uses are disallowed. The existing use (research and light manufacturing) is grandfathered because that use was legal at the time it was established (the property was then zoned Office-3). All new occupancy of the buildings for uses other than research and light manufacturing or those uses allowed in the Residence C-1 zone is subject to a use variance.

A proposal by the owners to rezone the parcel to permit office use as-of-right was submitted to the City Council in 2004, but on January 31, 2005, the Council failed to act before the statutory deadline, and the measure died.

B. Ownership and Occupancy

The Riverside Bindery property is owned by Pilot Putnam Avenue LLC, Pilot Development Partnership, Eden Milroy, manager. The complex is not fully occupied. A current occupant of the building is the GVD Corporation, a laboratory. Zoning relief was granted in 2004 to allow conversion of portions of the space for office use by an architecture firm.

C. Area Description

The Riverside Bindery complex occupies the center of the block bounded by Putnam and Western avenues, Blackstone and River streets at the edge of the Cambridgeport neighborhood and just east of Memorial Drive and the Charles River. A mix of single- and multi-family houses, apartments, offices, and industrial structures characterizes the neighborhood with residences along River Street, Putnam and Western avenues yielding to office and industrial

structures on Blackstone Street. West of the property are Riverside Press Park, a 133,000-square foot open space that includes both passive and active features that was built on the site of the Riverside Press in 1981, the Orion Research Building (1978, ADD Inc.), and the Cambridge Electric Light Company power station (1901, Sheaff & Jastad) and its associated structures. East, north, and south of the property is a mixed neighborhood of multi-family (mostly three-decker) housing, a large active recreational space (Hoyt Field), and the River-Howard housing complex (1980, Donham & Sweeney).

The block is circumscribed by major arterial roads including River Street and Western Avenue accessing Central Square and the Massachusetts Turnpike Extension; Memorial and Storrow Drive bordering the river, and Putnam Avenue, a Colonial-era street whose path through Cambridgeport marks the best way through marshes and mudflats that began to be filled in the 1860s.

D. Planning Issues

The planning issues surrounding the Riverside Bindery property relate to the continuing evolution of its zoning status, the broader patterns of zoning and use in the Riverside neighborhood, the interplay between established residential neighborhoods and the larger institutional and industrial structures that currently characterize the riverfront in this neighborhood, and to the relationships between the neighborhood's residential and institutional property owners, primarily Harvard University.

In 1999, the "Blackstone block" (the city block on which the Riverside Bindery stands) was downzoned from Office-3 to Residence C-1 as a result of residents' concerns over the inappropriate character of the density and height allowed in the Office-3 zone (FAR of 3.0 and height of 120'). In adopting the petition, the City Council overrode the Planning Board's recommendation that the block be rezoned with a combination of Residence C-1 zoning in the remaining residential lots and Office-2 in the section of the block that comprises the Bindery property. As a result of the rezoning effort, the Bindery property's use became non-conforming and the zoning envelope was reduced to a density and height consistent with the residential properties that adjoined it.

In the larger Riverside neighborhood, a long-term controversy was resolved in October, 2003 when the Residence C-3 zoning (FAR 3.0, height 120') that had been in place in the area west of Western Avenue along the river was amended to a lower density and height standard (FAR 1.0, height 35'-65'). The amended Special District 12 (SD-12), Special District 13 (SD-13), Special District 14 (SD-14), C-1, and Business A-3 zoning reduced the development potential on two Harvard-owned sites that had been of particular concern to the neighborhood's residents, the Mahoney's/Treeland garden center site at 889 Memorial Drive, and the Cambridge Electric Light Company site (also known as the NSTAR site) at 360-470 Western Avenue, 24-26 and 25-43 Blackstone Street. The Cambridge Electric Light Company Switch House at 25-43 Blackstone Street directly abuts the Riverside Bindery property and will be transferred by Harvard to the City of Cambridge as part of the zoning agreement and redeveloped for affordable housing.

While these agreements lay the groundwork for a new dialogue between the Riverside neighborhood and its larger abutters, it can be anticipated that as developments materialize for specific properties, further considerations will be brought to bear on the specific details and designs that implement the terms of the new zoning. The divergence of scale, density and use in the “seam” between the residential and institutional/industrial parcels is such that careful mediation of the design impacts of new development will be needed to appropriately merge old and new structures.

On the Riverside Bindery site (both the proposed protected premises and the adjoining commonly-owned parking lots), the existing FAR is 1.36, 0.61 over the allowable 0.75 for the zone. With the existing parking on the site, it is possible that the property may be converted for residential use at some point in the future. If it continues in its current use (or another allowable residential or non-residential use), the Riverside Bindery property can be expected to continue to be modified or adapted to suit new occupants, but since the present structures on the site now exceed the allowable FAR, it is unlikely that an owner would seek to clear the site.

Planning issues for the Bindery site are likely, therefore, to include: 1) ongoing zoning reviews if the owners of the property continue to seek commercial/office tenants for the space, and any physical modifications of the structures that may attend tenant fit-outs, 2) alterations to such elements as egress and exterior recreational spaces, fencing, landscaping, parking arrangements, and placement of mechanical equipment if the owners seek to convert the structures to the allowable residential uses, 3) ongoing zoning reviews if the owners seek to reconfigure, augment or remove the existing structures for allowable residential uses, and 4) alterations that may attend other allowable uses, such as institutional uses.

The owners of the property have offered the property for sale on at least one occasion. The plans of a religious institution to raze the complex and redevelop the site for use as a church, which is an allowable use under the Institutional Use Regulations in the C-1 zoning district precipitated four citizens’ petitions requesting the Commission to designate the buildings as landmarks. The petitions were received on October 25, 2002, and the Commission initiated a landmark designation study on November 7, 2002. At the request of the owners, the Commission postponed a designation hearing that was scheduled to be held in November 2003, and repeatedly extended the study and its concomitant protection period. The most recent extension expires on September 30, 2005.

During the extended study period, the Commission and the owner discussed the possibility of substituting a preservation restriction for a landmark designation, and proceeded to draft such an instrument. However, the owners conditioned acceptance of the restriction on their success in obtaining a rezoning of the property to allow offices. The failure of the City Council to act on this measure brought the landmark designation petition back to the agenda of the Cambridge Historical Commission, where it was heard on June 30, 2005.

At the final hearing on June 30, the staff reviewed the history of the matter and noted that the draft Landmark Designation Report differed from the proposed order designating the complex as a landmark. The staff had realized after the report had been prepared that the four citizen petitions that had initiated the Commission’s designation process referred to the four buildings

that comprise the complex, and not to the parking lots, which are not associated with the bindery's period of historic significance during its ownership by Little, Brown & Co. After extensive testimony and discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend for landmark designation only the four buildings on parcels 11 and 25.

E. Map

II. Description

The Riverside Bindery consists of four masonry structures built between ca. 1866 and 1929 by the publishing firm of Little, Brown & Co. The buildings are a two-and-a-half-story ca. 1870 building at the center of the complex; a three-story storage building at the southwest corner (21 Blackstone Street, Hartwell & Richardson, 1892); the three-story bindery at 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, Hartwell, Richardson & Driver, extended 1929); and a three-story storage building (19 Blackstone Street, 1920, Blackall, Clapp & Whittemore).

The oldest structure on the site, 21 Blackstone Street, is the gable-roofed brick building at the center of the complex. This building was built for fireproof storage of paper and bound books, and is heavier than most early mill construction, with a simple, rectangular plan, and symmetrical bays of segmental-arched windows with granite sills. The eaves are corbelled and broken with gable-roofed dormers. It was built between 1866 and 1873.

The 1892 building at 23 Blackstone Street by Hartwell & Richardson is a flat-roofed three-story structure with a utilitarian rectangular footprint, distinguished by its patterned and polychrome red and orange brick in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The narrow end wall fronting Blackstone Street features, on the first floor, a pair of punched windows with tall, orange-brick voussoirs in the center bays and flanking orange-brick diamond-patterned lozenges in the outer bays. On the second floor is a bank of four, round-arched windows with corbelled sills and headers in the same orange brick. Corbelling embellishes the third floor as well, with stringcourses at the windowsill height and just below a stepped, patterned-brick cornice.

By the same firm, but more utilitarian and industrially scaled, is the 1902 bindery building at 237 Putnam Avenue. Punched window openings dominate the long elevation on Putnam Avenue and mask subtle organizational distinctions that enrich the design. The building rests on a raised half-story basement. The first-story masonry projects one brick-course beyond the basement elevation and aligns with the brownstone sills of the first-floor windows to form a continuous string course around the structure. The second-story is set apart by having punched window openings with sandstone sills. A corbelled stringcourse at the third floor forms the sill of those windows, which are further differentiated by being recessed in corbelled spandrels and topped with corbelled voussoirs. The window sash are all bronze aluminum, one-over-one, double-hung replacements of the original sash; however, the pintles for iron fire shutters remain. In 1929, the building was extended to the north by seven bays; the extension is well integrated with the original design with brickwork that replicates the earlier detailing and color.

The entrance to the building is simple but handsome. Centered on the long Putnam Avenue elevation, it is framed in a shallow projecting surround with a sandstone cornice. The door, which is deeply recessed beneath a corbelled, segmental arch with a tall sandstone keystone, has been replaced along with the door surround. Further ornamenting the entrance are the wrought-iron hardware supports for a flagpole, including a large and elaborate bracket with flat-stock arabesque infill for the base of the pole and two huge, flanged collar-bolts to hold the pole itself. An attractive wrought-iron picket fence runs the length of the building. The fence features decorative end posts at the entrances and corners and a tall vehicular gate at the north end. The fence appears to be consistent with the 1902 construction.

The most utilitarian of the buildings in the complex is the three-story brick shipping warehouse/storage building at 19 Blackstone Street. Designed by Blackall, Clapp & Whittemore in 1920 as a storage building and printing office, the structure is a simple, flat-roofed, rectangular brick building with large window openings with concrete headers and sills; the windows are paired, bronze aluminum replacement sash with a spandrel panel at the top. The original windows were steel industrial sash, better suited to the scale of the openings.

A large asphalt-paved parking lot covering the southern half of the site is not part of the proposed protected premises.

III. History of the Property

A. Historic Development Patterns

The Riverside Bindery is located at the western edge of the Riverside section of Cambridgeport, adjacent to a tract of land that was developed by the printing industry beginning in 1851.

Prior to 1800, Cambridgeport and Riverside were virtually uninhabited, with marshland and mudflats surrounding areas of higher ground that were used for farming and pasture. The construction of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 connecting present-day Kendall Square to the foot of Beacon Hill changed the area from a backwater to a locus of intersecting transportation networks that in turn spurred commercial, residential and industrial growth through the 19th century. The construction of the Brighton Bridge at River Street in 1811 and the Western Avenue Bridge in 1824 opened this area to development, but Putnam Avenue, which followed a finger of land surrounded by salt marsh south from Massachusetts Avenue at Putnam Square, was not extended to River Street until after 1854, and the connection across the marsh to Cambridgeport was not made until about 1870.

The Cambridge Almshouse, a three-story brick structure erected on 11 acres of town land by the river, was the city's third such facility; the surrounding land supported kitchen gardens that supplied food for the inmates and for sale. When the isolation deemed appropriate for a workhouse was lessened by highway and road construction, the city constructed a new facility in North Cambridge in 1851 and sold the Riverside property to Charles C. Little and James Brown, the proprietors of the publishing firm that became Little, Brown & Co. Little and Brown leased the property to Henry O. Houghton, who was operating a printing plant they also owned on Remington Street.

Little and Brown established the Riverside Bindery across Blackstone Street shortly after they sold Houghton the Riverside Press in 1863. The original Riverside Bindery consisted of a wood frame building on Blackstone Street and a fireproof warehouse that is probably the present gabled storehouse (see photo). Little, Brown expanded the bindery by adding buildings in 1886, 1892, and 1920, but apparently did no printing on this site; presumably, the printing was done across the street at Houghton, Mifflin's Riverside Press, or at other printers nearby.

The Riverside Press and the Riverside Bindery were joined on Blackstone Street by the Standard Diary Co., which occupied an adjacent building designed by Chamberlin & Whidden in 1889. Standard Diary went out of business in the Depression, but the Riverside Press continued in operation until 1972, when the entire facility was razed and replaced by the Riverside Press Park. The Riverside Bindery became vacant by 1963. Later, it was occupied as a furniture warehouse and sheltered workshop, and then by a variety of electronics research and manufacturing firms, most notably Bio-Rad, Inc. It became vacant again in about 2000, and is now only partially occupied.

The neighborhood around the Riverside Press originally included a number of houses on Blackstone Street as well as on Putnam Avenue, and developed in part on land sold by Charles Little and James Brown. For many years the factories and their surrounding houses were isolated

from the rest of the Riverside neighborhood by a marsh and millrace, but once the city developed Hoyt Field as a park about 1900 the remaining vacant land was built up with three-deckers along Western Avenue and smaller houses on the side streets.

The other major feature of the immediate neighborhood is the former Cambridge Electric Co. Blackstone Station, an electricity and steam generating plant that is now owned by Harvard University. The original plant was developed on the river in 1887, but was replaced by the present facility in 1901. Blackstone Station now generates steam for the Harvard campus. Harvard now plans to rehabilitate the plant with new boilers and establish a base for its buildings and ground crews in the former support buildings and Standard Dairy plant. The switchhouse, so called, on the east side of Blackstone Street abutting the Riverside Bindery, will be developed for 34 units of affordable housing.

The composition of the neighborhood has changed since the demise of industry in Riverside, and the community has become much more sensitive to the possibility of overdevelopment. The residents forced Cambridge Electric to locate a switchyard further down Putnam Avenue in the early 1990s, obtained the zoning change to residential use in 1999, and opposed the rezoning desired by the owners in 2004 and 2005.

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IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

In the 17th century Cambridge had the first press in British North America, and in the 19th century printing became the single most important industry in Old Cambridge. The trade was dominated by a few close associates who were the center of a complex community of authors, editors, printers, binders, and booksellers. The two most important printers in Old Cambridge -- the University Press and the Riverside Press -- were among the best known in America.

The first printing press in the American colonies arrived in 1638 with the widow and servants of the Reverend Jose Glover, who had died on the voyage. Stephen Day, a member of the party although not a trained printer, set up the press and in 1640 produced *The Bay Psalm Book*. Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard, acquired the press when he married Elizabeth Glover in 1641; after her death in 1643, he moved it into his residence. Harvard soon acquired another press and served as a general printer of religious and legal tracts for the colony until 1692, when the enterprise was abandoned in favor of commercial printers in Boston.

Printing resumed in Cambridge in 1800. When Timothy Hilliard, the pastor of the First Parish Church and a member of Harvard's Board of Overseers, died suddenly in 1790, his son William could not afford to attend Harvard with his two older brothers and was instead apprenticed to a printer in Boston. William returned to Cambridge in 1800 to open a printing office and immediately secured the college's patronage; one of his first jobs was to print the Commencement broadside for that year. In 1802, when the Corporation voted to procure its own printing press and type, engage a printer, and establish the "University Press," the president turned to Hilliard, who operated the college's press alongside his own and published books under the University Press imprint. Eliab Metcalf, a printer from Wrentham, became a partner in 1808, and in 1823 Hilliard & Metcalf induced the college to construct a new print shop on Holyoke Street.

William Hilliard was not merely a printer, but also engaged in bookselling and publishing. At an early date he opened the University Bookstore, which later occupied the brick building that still stands at Massachusetts Avenue and Holyoke Street. About 1812 he entered into a partnership with Jacob Cummings, proprietor of the Boston Bookstore and author of some of the textbooks Hilliard was printing. As Cummings, Hilliard, the firm printed and sold many of the books that were required for admission to Harvard College, and also imported books to sell in the two shops. The firm published books by Harvard faculty members and employed several young men who later became important in the trade, including Charles C. Little and James Brown. John Bartlett joined the University Bookstore as an apprentice bookbinder in 1836 and owned the store from 1849 to 1858; he published *College Words and Customs* in 1851 and the first edition of his best-known reference book, *Familiar Quotations*, in 1855.

Hilliard & Metcalf ran the University Press for Harvard until 1827, when the college sold its interest to Metcalf alone for \$5,500. University Press then became a trade name that was owned by a succession of firms, including Welch, Bigelow & Company in 1859 and John Wilson & Son in 1879. In 1863, Welch, Bigelow moved the University Press from Harvard's old printing plant on Holyoke Street into the defunct Brattle House hotel; by 1880 the firm had more than 300 employees and 58 presses. In the meantime the firm had established a relationship with James R.

Osgood & Company, the leading Boston publisher of the day; books by Holmes, Palfrey, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Whittier, Emerson, and Lowell were all published under the University Press imprint. However, the Osgood firm failed and threw Welch, Bigelow into bankruptcy in 1879. Henry O. Houghton then acquired Osgood's list and published many of his authors at The Riverside Press.

John Wilson & Son, the successor to Welch, Bigelow, was originally a Boston firm that occupied Harvard's old plant on Holyoke Street in 1865. In 1879, it took over the Brattle Square facility, but maintained the University Press imprint. The connection with Harvard remained strong, although the college established its own printing office in 1872 to provide a secure means of printing examination booklets. After a reorganization in 1895, the University Press built a large plant designed by Boston architect Morton D. Safford on University Road, facing the Charles River. The literary connection that had been severed in 1879 was never fully restored, however, and the company became a contract printer, producing books for various publishers and advertising pieces for direct mail campaigns, for which it maintained a full art department. A merger in 1929 with Tolman Print, a Brockton firm specializing in shoebox labels, reinforced this trend, although considerable work for publishers and the university continued. In 1966, the University Press moved to Winchester. Its plant was razed and replaced by the condominiums at University Green.

The second great printing house in Cambridge, the Riverside Press, was founded by Henry O. Houghton, who came to Boston from Vermont in 1846 and secured work as a proofreader. In 1848, Houghton purchased a partnership in the printing firm of Freeman & Bolles and immediately moved the business to a new building that the Boston law book publisher Little & Brown was erecting on Remington Street.

The firm of Little & Brown – today, Little, Brown & Company -- had deep roots in Cambridge, where both founders learned the business from William Hilliard. Charles C. Little was born in Maine in 1799, became a clerk at Hilliard's store in Boston, and was made a partner in 1827. James Brown was born in Acton in 1800, was hired as a clerk in Hilliard's University Bookstore in Cambridge, and became a partner in 1826. Brown also acquired an interest in the Boston store and became a partner of Little's; in 1837 they formed a new partnership that became Little & Brown.

Both Little and Brown played an important role in Old Cambridge. Little married William Hilliard's daughter Sarah in 1829 and moved into John Appleton's Federal mansion (163 Brattle Street) in 1840. He took an active role in the development of Cambridge before the Civil War and joined Gardiner Hubbard and Estes Howe in some of their enterprises. He developed the Appleton estate, which extended over the hill to Vassal Lane, and much of the Winthrop estate along the Charles River; he also built Little's Block (1854), the first private dormitory for undergraduates.

James Brown lived in Cambridge only until 1829, but was active in literary circles and traveled abroad for the firm. Like many Boston booksellers of the day, Little & Brown also published books and had close relationships with printers. Their move to Remington Street was fortuitous for both Houghton and Little & Brown because of the growing labor unrest among Boston's ninety-odd printing firms. Cambridge was still outside union territory when the Boston printers went on strike in November 1849 over low wages and the employment of women as

compositors. A young woman reader for Houghton set type during the strike and was attacked by a mob of Boston printers; nonetheless, Houghton

quietly went about amongst some teachers and other well-educated young women in Cambridge, persuaded them to put themselves under his tuition, privately trained them to set type, and, when the battle seemed to have gone against him, suddenly appeared with his reinforcements. . . . He was one of the first to demonstrate on a considerable scale the practicability of the employment of women in this capacity (Scudder, Houghton, 73, in Ballou, 26).

Houghton's decision to employ women enabled him to keep his shop open throughout the strike, and made it necessary to expand after it ended. The Remington Street facility was quite small. Little owned all the surrounding property, but he may have felt that an isolated site offered more security from labor unrest. In 1851, Little & Brown purchased the former Cambridge Alms House, a brick building on the river between Western Avenue and River Street, and Houghton's firm -- now Houghton & Haywood -- moved there in February 1852.

Houghton continued as a job or contract printer until 1863, and printed all the work of Little & Brown, Ticknor & Fields, and G. & C. Merriam & Co. During this period Houghton developed relationships with many Cambridge authors. James Russell Lowell, for example, worked at the Riverside Press as editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* between 1857 and 1861, and often walked to work along the Charles River from Elmwood to Riverside.

When Little & Brown abruptly canceled its printing contract in 1863, Houghton purchased the plant and entered into a new partnership with Melancthon Hurd, a Connecticut bookseller with strong New York connections; the firm then became a publisher as well as a printer, with offices in Boston. Houghton served as mayor of Cambridge in 1872-73, and lived first on Dana Street and then in a mansion at 1000 Massachusetts Avenue overlooking his plant. Little & Brown built a bindery across Blackstone Street from the Riverside Press, and apparently retained Houghton as a contract printer. This facility originally consisted of a frame factory building and a fireproof brick warehouse, which is now surrounded by later structures erected by Little, Brown between 1886 and 1930.

The Riverside Press evolved into a major industrial complex with fifteen multi-story brick and concrete buildings that were fully described in the Commission's *Report Three: Cambridgeport*. The Press was an important source of employment for skilled immigrants, and generations of Riverside residents depended on it. Although the work was generally clean and required a high level of skill, conditions were not easy. The Cambridge Typographical Union won a reduction in the ten-hour, six-day week to an eight-hour, six-day week in 1906, well before the eight-hour day became usual in other trades. In the difficult conditions that followed the First World War, however, the manufacturers resisted a union demand for a 44-hour week and a return to previous pay levels, and this triggered a strike in 1921. During the Depression in the 1930's, business was so slow that workers were paid to work only three days every other week, but none were laid off.

As a subsidiary of Houghton, Mifflin, the Riverside Press prospered until 1966, when the parent company found itself unable to sustain the aging plant and offered it for sale. By this time, the Riverside Bindery had already ceased operations. When the plant closed in 1971, the Riverside Press had maintained an intimate connection between Cambridge authors and their publishers longer than any other firm. Efforts to preserve the buildings, including the original Cambridge almshouse of 1838, were unsuccessful, and all were demolished in 1973.

A third important printing venture failed at an early date but left the only other surviving architectural legacy in Cambridge of this important industry. When Houghton & Bolles moved to Riverside in 1851, Little & Brown leased the plant on Remington Street to John C. Allen and John C. Farnham, who relocated from Boston. Allen & Farnham operated on Remington Street until 1860, when the firm bought land between Arrow and Mount Auburn streets next to William Winthrop's mansion. By 1862, with the help of a \$10,000 loan from Harvard University, it had erected a printing plant complete with steam boiler, engine, and shafting to drive the presses. In 1865, Allen & Farnham sold the property to Frederick B. Dakin of Boston and Eliab W. Metcalf of Cambridge, whose further improvements doubled the value of the property, but when this firm failed in 1867 the plant was sold to the Reversible Collar Company. At that time, the property consisted of a frame factory building, a brick engine house, and a brick residence for the engineer. In 1870, the company added a superintendent's office on Arrow Street and expanded the factory on Mount Auburn Street. Additional expansion took place in 1875. While the buildings that remain on Arrow and Mount Auburn Streets were originally associated with the printing business, little or none of the original Allen & Farnham plant survives.

B. Architectural Significance

Chronologically, the Riverside Bindery buildings comprise a two-and-a-half-story storage building at the center of the complex (21 Blackstone Street, before 1873); a three-story storage building at the northwest corner (23 Blackstone Street, Hartwell & Richardson, 1892); the three-story main bindery building at 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, Hartwell, Richardson & Driver); and a three-story storage building (19 Blackstone Street, 1920, Blackall, Clapp & Whittemore).

1. 21 Blackstone Street, fireproof paper and book storage (architect unknown, before 1873). This building is unique in Cambridge, and the only surviving structure of its type. The gable roof bespeaks the intent to provide a waterproof as well as fireproof building, since flat roof technology had not been perfected at the time. The intricate detailing of the cornice is exceptional on such a utilitarian building.
2. 23 Blackstone Street, storage (Hartwell & Richardson, 1892). This building and the bindery are rare examples of industrial buildings designed by a firm that was much better known for its elaborate residences and institutional buildings. The Boston partnership of Henry Hartwell and William C. Richardson designed such houses as 37 Lancaster Ave. and 26 and 37 Washington Avenue. Organizationally and in its materials and detailing, 23 Blackstone Street echoes the richly patterned façade of Hartwell & Richardson's Odd Fellow's Hall (1884) in Central Square.
3. 237 Putnam Avenue, bindery (Hartwell, Richardson & Driver, 1902). At 237 Putnam Avenue, the Hartwell firm applied their institutional design vocabulary to what would otherwise be a conventional New England mill construction factory. The use of fine waterstruck brick, flat arches above the windows, a corbelled and dentilled cornice, and brownstone trim distinguish this building from others of the period, which would have displayed none of these details. The 1929 addition was apparently designed by the builders, the Aberthaw Construction Company, to match the original as closely as possible.
4. 19 Blackstone Street, storage (Blackall, Clapp & Whittemore, 1920). The last building at the Riverside Press was also designed by a surprising choice of architect. The Blackall

firm was much better known for their theatres and office buildings, office buildings, and houses or worship. Among their better-known works are Temple Ohabei Shalom in Brookline (1928) and the Schubert, Modern, and Metropolitan (Wang Center) Theatres in Boston. In this example, however, there are few features that distinguish this building from other concrete and brick factories of the day.

The Riverside Bindery buildings are significant both individually and as a complex for their distinguished character and for their associations with well-known architects.

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Criteria for Designation (Article III, Section 2.78.180)

The criteria for designation contained in Article III state as follows:

The Historical Commission by majority vote may recommend for designation as a landmark any property within the City being or containing a place, structure, feature or object which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures . . .

B. Relation of Property to Criteria

The Riverside Bindery complex at 237 Putnam Avenue and 19-23 Blackstone Street is eligible for landmark designation under criterion (1) for its associations with the industrial history of Cambridge, and under criterion (2) for its historic and architectural significance in terms of the period and style of the bindery and storage buildings

Printing and publishing were a signature industry in 19th century Cambridge, and were attracted here by the presence of Harvard University and by the city's many authors. The firm of Little, Brown & Co. was the progenitor of the modern publishing business in the Boston area, and the Riverside Bindery maintains a direct and tangible link to the early days of the firm.

Architecturally, the Riverside Bindery buildings are significant both individually and as a complex for their distinguished character, quality of materials and method of construction, and for their associations with well-known architects.

VI. Recommendations

A. Purpose of Landmark Designation (Article III, 2.78.140)

The purpose of landmark designation is defined in Section 140 of Article III as follows:

The City Council finds it necessary to enact this article . . . in order to preserve, conserve and protect the beauty and heritage of the City and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation and maintenance of . . . structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose; to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such . . . structures; and by furthering these purposes to promote the public welfare by making the City a more attractive and desirable place in which to live and work. To achieve these purposes, the City may designate . . . landmarks to be administered as set forth in this article.

B. Preservation Options

There are two options available to accomplish the long-term preservation of the Riverside Bindery complex. The first is through a City Council vote to designate the property as a landmark; the second could be accomplished through the owner's voluntary donation of a preservation restriction or easement.

According to Article III, Chapter 2.78.190, designation of the Riverside Bindery as a landmark would establish a process wherein "the Historical Commission . . . shall review all construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color," of the landmark. Chapter 2.78.210 states, "No building permit for alteration of an exterior architectural feature of a landmark . . . and no demolition permit for demolition or removal of a landmark . . . shall be issued by the City or any department thereof until the certificate required by this article has been issued by the Historical Commission."

A certificate of appropriateness, hardship or non-applicability is issued by the Historical Commission depending on the nature of the alteration or construction proposed for the landmark. Applications for certificates of appropriateness or hardship are reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, with 14 days notice provided to affected parties by legal notice and first class mail. The staff issues certificates of non-applicability administratively. The intent of the review process is to prevent "developments incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance or the distinctive character of the landmark" (2.78.220). The designation report may be drafted to allow specific development opportunities to take place on the property.

Preservation easements for buildings may be donated to the Historical Commission or another qualified historic preservation organization under Chapter 184 of the Massachusetts General Laws. An easement is a "non-possessory right to control what happens to buildings or land owned by others." It is voluntarily conveyed by the property owner to an entity, such as the Historical Commission, which holds the right and enforces the terms. To be effective, the easement must protect the publicly visible features of the subject property from alteration

without the Commission's prior review. It may also be drafted to allow specific development opportunities to take place or to protect significant interior features.

Donation of an easement encourages private investment in significant buildings with no corresponding expenditure of public funds. Under Internal Revenue Service regulations, the value of an easement on a property listed on or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places may be taken as a charitable deduction on personal income taxes. The value of an easement is calculated by taking the difference between "before" and "after" appraisals of the property. However, the rules for charitable contribution deductions for preservation easements are very technical. Any property owner considering the donation of an easement should consult a qualified tax consultant relative to the specific circumstances. While the Riverside Bindery is not listed on the National Register, the staff contends that it meets the criteria for consideration.

Preservation easements protect significant property in a similar manner to landmarking, that is, through review and approval of the Historical Commission and issuance of a certificate of appropriateness or hardship for any proposed repairs or alterations that affect protected portions of the property. Unlike landmarking, a preservation easement may have certain financial benefits for an owner and can address the protection of significant interior features.

If the Riverside Bindery complex is determined by the Massachusetts Historical Commission to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places it also becomes eligible for certain tax benefits for certified rehabilitation under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Restoration or adaptive use of the property through the joint Internal Revenue Service-Department of the Interior preservation tax incentive program provides for a 20% tax credit.

The owners of the Riverside Bindery complex and the Cambridge Historical Commission drafted a preservation restriction in 2004 that would have met all the requirements for preservation of the property. Acceptance of this document by both parties would have allowed the Commission to terminate the landmark designation process, but circumstances related to the proposed rezoning of the property caused the owners to rescind their offer. Nevertheless, many of the terms of the draft preservation restriction have been incorporated into the proposed Order.

C. Commission Recommendation

On June 30, 2005, the Cambridge Historical Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the City Council that it adopt the proposed Order designating the Riverside Bindery Complex as a Landmark under Ch. 2.78, Article III of the city code. In addition, the Commission voted to approve this Landmark Designation Study Report and to authorize the staff and the Commission Chair to make appropriate editorial changes to reflect their action.

VII. Standards and Criteria

A. Introduction

Under Article III, the Historical Commission is charged with reviewing any construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features (other than color) of a landmark. This report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics that led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, the exterior architectural features described in this report should be preserved and/or enhanced in any proposed alteration or construction that affects those features of the landmark. The standards following in paragraphs B and C of this section provide specific guidelines for the treatment of the landmark described in this report.

B. General Standards and Criteria

Subject to review and approval of exterior architectural features under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. Significant historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark, which have taken place over time, are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and, if so, that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions shall not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinct character of the landmark, neighborhood, and environment.
8. New additions should be done in a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark should be unimpaired.

C. Provisions of the Order Relating Specifically to the Riverside Bindery Complex

Several provisions of the Order were adapted from the proposed preservation restriction, and have not been incorporated in other landmark designation orders. These provisions were designed to promote efficient administration of the landmark and provide specific criteria for future alterations. These provisions are as follows:

1. Consultation with Commission Staff. The Owner shall consult with the staff of the Commission prior to commencing any other exterior alteration of the Designated Façades in order to determine whether the same might be considered by the Commission to result in a material change in the appearance of the Designated Façades, and the Owner may conclusively rely upon any written response from the staff as to such matter. The staff of the Commission shall respond within five (5) business days after receiving any written request from the Owner, together with plans therefore, to determine whether any proposed exterior alteration of the Designated Façades might be considered by the Commission to result in a material change in the appearance of the Designated Façades. In the event that the staff of the Commission fails to respond to such a written request within such five (5) business day period, the proposed exterior alteration shall be deemed not to result in a material change in the appearance of the Designated Façades.
2. Lighting. Nothing in this Designation shall be construed as restricting the Owner's right to install interior lighting and fixtures therefore which may be visible from the public ways other than lighting or fixtures whose principal purpose is illuminated signage or advertising. Nothing in this Designation shall be construed as restricting the type or amount of exterior illumination on the Designated Façades that does not involve attachment of any fixture to any Designated Façade. In addition such lighting shall comply with all governmental codes and requirements.
3. Signs. The Commission has heretofore approved and the Owner reserves the right to maintain the current signage on the Designated Façades. Replacement signage in the same locations shall be reviewed as an alteration subject to the terms of this Order, unless the replacement signage is of comparable size, materials and color as the currently existing or approved signage in which case the terms of this Order with respect to alterations shall not be applicable. In addition such signs shall comply with all governmental codes and requirements.
4. Rooftop Equipment. Any and all mechanical and other equipment which the Owner currently maintains on top of the buildings (including like replacement), or which the Owner may need to place on top of the buildings in the future to service the needs of the buildings' occupants, shall be exempt from regulation by the Commission, provided that such equipment is located at least 10 feet from all Designated Façades and is no more than ten feet higher than the roof plane.
5. Maintenance and Repair. The Owner shall at all times maintain the Designated Façades in good order and condition. Nothing in this designation shall be

construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior architectural feature of the Designated Façades, which does not involve a change in design, material or color of any exterior architectural feature of the Designated Façades after completion of improvements thereto, or otherwise change the outward appearance of the Designated Façades, nor to prevent landscaping the premises with plants, trees or shrubs; nor shall this Designation be construed to prevent the meeting of requirements certified by a duly authorized public officer to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.

6. Destruction. In the event that the Designated Façades above the buildings' foundations are totally destroyed by fire or other casualty, this Designation shall terminate on the date of such destruction or casualty. In the event that the Designated Façades are not totally destroyed by such fire or casualty but damage thereto is so serious as to cause restoration to be financially impractical in the reasonable judgment of the Owner, this Designation shall terminate on the date of such destruction or casualty. Upon such termination in the case of either of the foregoing events, the Owner shall deliver a duly executed and acknowledged notice of such termination to the Commission and record a duplicate original of said notice with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds and/or file a duplicate original of said notice in the Middlesex South Registry District of the Land Court. Such notice shall be conclusive evidence in favor of every person dealing with the Premises as to the facts set forth therein.

D. Suggested Review Guidelines

1. If the windows are replaced, the original fenestration pattern of the Riverside Bindery complex should be reinstated in the new windows. This would entail replicating small-light steel factory sash at 19 Blackstone, a pattern to be determined at 21 Blackstone, 6+6 and 4+4 sash in 23 Blackstone Street, and 8+8 double-hung sash in 237 Putnam Avenue.
2. If the front door is altered, consideration should be given to replicating the original door shown in the ca. 1966 views of the building.
3. Contractors engaging masonry cleaning, repairs, waterproofing or pointing should take care to match the original bricks, mortar, and joint profile, and may not proceed without owner and Commission approval of a sample of the proposed work.
4. Signs should be consistent with the character and use of the building, and should conform to the Cambridge zoning ordinance.
5. The Riverside Bindery complex should remain intact and recognizable as a major design feature within any development proposals for the property as a whole; this would include maintaining the free-standing character of the principal elevations (east and west facing), maintaining a sharp contrast in surrounding building

materials, and retaining the original pattern and relationship of solids to openings in the walls.

Revised 7/5/05

VIII. Proposed Order Designating the Riverside Bindery Complex as a Landmark

ORDERED:

That the Riverside Bindery complex, consisting of buildings at 19, 21, and 23 Blackstone Street and 237 Putnam Avenue, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on June 30, 2005. The premises so designated are defined as parcels 11 and 25 of assessor's map 129. The record Owner as of 2004 is Pilot Putnam Avenue LLC, Eden Milroy, Manager. The Owner's title to the property is recorded in the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, Book 32004, page 15. The term "Designated Facades" herein refers to the facades of the existing buildings located on said premises currently visible from any public way and to any portion of such façade.

This Designation is justified by the significant associations of this complex with the broad architectural, economic, and social history of the City and the Commonwealth, and, specifically, for its associations with the industrial history of Cambridge, and for the distinguished character of its architecture, as referenced in the Final Landmark Designation Study Report of the Cambridge Historical Commission dated July 6, 2005.

The effect of this Designation shall be that no building permit may be issued nor construction activity may take place within the designated area, and no action may be taken affecting the appearance of buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4 at 19-23 Blackstone Street and 237 Putnam Avenue, that would in either case be visible from any public way, without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. This designation shall not be construed to prevent new construction on the designated premises; however, any new structure that would obscure the view of a publicly visible Designated Façade must be reviewed by the Cambridge Historical Commission and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be.

In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by Section VII, Standards and Criteria, of the Final Landmark Designation Study Report, and by the applicable sections of Article 2.78. The issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability shall not be unreasonably withheld. No approval shall be required for any changes: (i) previously approved by the Commission; (ii) which do not materially change the appearance of the Designated Façades; or (iii) which are exempted from the Commission's review by virtue of other terms of this Order. In deciding whether to grant such approval, the Commission shall consider, among other things, the historical and architectural value and significance of the Designated Façades and the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features of structures in the surrounding areas, as well as the technical requirements and physical requirements of necessary building equipment, the operational needs of the buildings (and their occupants), applicable code and regulatory requirements, and any demonstrable and substantial hardship that the Owner or the occupants may suffer from the Commission's refusal to grant the requested approval.

In the event of any lawful order of any governmental authority directed to the Owner to comply with any applicable code or regulatory requirements, which involves or requires construction or alteration of the Designated Façades to comply therewith, the Owner shall apply to the Commission for approval of the construction or alteration as set forth above, and the Commission will evaluate the effect of such order upon the Designated Façades, and may condition its approval of the alteration requested to comply with such order upon the Owner's undertaking reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effects that may result from compliance, but the Commission shall not otherwise prevent the Owner from complying with such order by denying approval of the alteration or construction requested.

The Commission shall not consider and shall have no jurisdiction over interior features or improvements, nor any portion of the buildings or the designated premises not included in the Designated Façades. The Commission shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for the purposes of preventing alterations to the Designated Façades that would appear to be incongruous with the historical aspects or other architectural characteristics of the Designated Façades.

Consultation with Commission Staff. The Owner shall consult with the staff of the Commission prior to commencing any other exterior alteration of the Designated Façades in order to determine whether the same might be considered by the Commission to result in a material change in the appearance of the Designated Façades, and the Owner may conclusively rely upon any written response from the staff as to such matter. The staff of the Commission shall respond within five (5) business days after receiving any written request from the Owner, together with plans therefor, to determine whether any proposed exterior alteration of the Designated Façades might be considered by the Commission to result in a material change in the appearance of the Designated Façades. In the event that the staff of the Commission fails to respond to such a written request within such five (5) business day period, the proposed exterior alteration shall be deemed not to result in a material change in the appearance of the Designated Façades.

Lighting. Nothing in this Designation shall be construed as restricting the Owner's right to install interior lighting and fixtures therefor which may be visible from the public ways other than lighting or fixtures whose principal purpose is illuminated signage or advertising. Nothing in this Designation shall be construed as restricting the type or amount of exterior illumination on the Designated Façades that does not involve attachment of any fixture to any Designated Façade. In addition such lighting shall comply with all governmental codes and requirements.

Signs. The Commission has heretofore approved and the Owner reserves the right to maintain the current signage on the Designated Façades. Replacement signage in the same locations shall be reviewed as an alteration subject to the terms of this Order, unless the replacement signage is of comparable size, materials and color as the currently existing or approved signage in which case the terms of this Order with respect to alterations shall not be applicable. In addition such signs shall comply with all governmental codes and requirements.

Rooftop Equipment. Any and all mechanical and other equipment which the Owner currently maintains on top of the buildings (including like replacement), or which the Owner may need to place on top of the buildings in the future to service the needs of the buildings' occupants, shall

be exempt from regulation by the Commission, provided that such equipment is located at least 10 feet from all Designated Façades and is no more than ten feet higher than the roof plane.

Maintenance and Repair. The Owner shall at all times maintain the Designated Façades in good order and condition. Nothing in this designation shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior architectural feature of the Designated Façades, which does not involve a change in design, material or color of any exterior architectural feature of the Designated Façades after completion of improvements thereto, or otherwise change the outward appearance of the Designated Façades, nor to prevent landscaping the premises with plants, trees or shrubs; nor shall this Designation be construed to prevent the meeting of requirements certified by a duly authorized public officer to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.

Destruction. In the event that the Designated Façades above the buildings' foundations are totally destroyed by fire or other casualty, this Designation shall terminate on the date of such destruction or casualty. In the event that the Designated Façades are not totally destroyed by such fire or casualty but damage thereto is so serious as to cause restoration to be financially impractical in the reasonable judgment of the Owner, this Designation shall terminate on the date of such destruction or casualty. Upon such termination in the case of either of the foregoing events, the Owner shall deliver a duly executed and acknowledged notice of such termination to the Commission and record a duplicate original of said notice with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds and/or file a duplicate original of said notice in the Middlesex South Registry District of the Land Court. Such notice shall be conclusive evidence in favor of every person dealing with the Premises as to the facts set forth therein.

Appendix

Statement of Owners Representative

Northeast view of 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929)
from Putnam Avenue, July 15, 2005

Northwest view of 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) and rear of
19 Blackstone Street (1920) from Putnam Avenue, July 15, 2005

Southwest view of 19 Blackstone Street (1920) and the rear of
237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) from Blackstone Street, July 15, 2005

Northwest view of 23 Blackstone Street (1892) and
19 Blackstone Street (1920)
from Blackstone Street, July 15, 2005

Northeast view of 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) from Putnam Avenue, July 15, 2005

Northeast view of 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) and 21 Blackstone St. (ca. 1870) from Putnam Avenue, July 15, 2005

Northwest view of 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) and rear of 19 Blackstone Street (1920) from Putnam Avenue, July 15, 2005

Southwest view of 19 Blackstone Street (1920), south gable end of 21 Blackstone Street (ca. 1870), loading dock and link structure, and 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) from Blackstone Street, July 15, 2005

Southwest view of 19 Blackstone Street (1920), loading dock and link structure, and 237 Putnam Avenue (1902, 1929) from Blackstone Street, July 15, 2005

Northwest view of 23 Blackstone Street (1892) and 19 Blackstone Street (1920) from Blackstone Street, July 15, 2005

Northwest view of 21 Blackstone Street (ca. 1870), 23 Blackstone Street (1892) and 19 Blackstone Street (1920) from Blackstone Street, July 15, 2005